

P41

Intake of selected foods by vegetarians and omnivores in the adult adipocytokine study

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Background – Vegetarian eating patterns and specific foods such as fruit and vegetables, whole grains, nuts, legumes and soy foods have been linked to reduced risk of a variety of diseases. Few Australian studies have compared the amounts of specific categories of foods consumed by vegetarians (V) and omnivores (O).

Objective – To compare the intake of selected foods by V and O women who participated in the Adult Adipocytokine Study (AAS).

Design – Comparative study of V (70) and O (99) women (18-65 years) recruited for AAS at three sites in NSW with large numbers of Seventh-day Adventists. Diet was assessed by the Victorian Cancer Council FFQ and a specific vegetarian FFQ. Participants were classified as V if total intake of meat, poultry and fish <100 g/week. Intake (g/day) of selected food categories was compared for V and O using the Mann-Whitney test.

Outcomes – Intakes of soymilk, soybeans & tofu, legumes, nuts, seeds, fruits, and allium vegetables were significantly higher for the V group ($P<0.05$). Intakes of fresh meat & chicken, processed meat, fish & fish products, milk & dairy products, and alcohol were all significantly higher within the O group ($P<0.05$). V had a higher intake of whole grains but the difference did not reach significance ($P=0.059$). Total vegetable intake was not significantly different ($P=0.537$).

Conclusion – The V and O women who participated in AAS differed significantly in their intake of a range of foods other than the expected fresh meat and poultry, processed meat and fish and fish products.

P42

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